

An exhortacion made to Relygrouse sisters in
the tyme of theyr consecracyon by the Reuerende
fader in god Johan Alcock byshop of Ely.

I aske the banes betwix the hyghe and moost
myghty pryncce kyng of all kynges sone of almygh
ty god and the virgyn Mary in humanyte Cryste
Jhesu of Nazareth of the one partye. And .A. B.
of the thother partye / that yf any man or woman
can shewe any lawfull Juycedymment other by any
precontracte made or corrupcyon of body or soule
of the sayd .A. B. that she ought not to be marred
this daye vnto the sayd myghty pryncce Jhesu that
they wolde accordynge vnto the lawe shewe it.



Dod syster we are here gadred befo
re almyghy god and all his sayn
tes in heuen in his churche here my
lytaunt to solempne this noble spow
sage bytwene the sayd sone of als
myghty god and you / whiche spow
sage muste be of your partye desyred with all your
hoole herte & free wyll / not compelled by none of
your frendes / nor for cause of worldly worshyp nor
ease of your body / but oonly for the loue & seruyce
ye owe to the sayd myghty pryncce / to serue hym &
obeye hym & kepe his comaundementes / and all o
ther men & worldly worshyp renounce and forsake

and hym to loue aboue all thyng & his preceptes
 to performe and all other thyng to do that pertaineth
 to a good wyfe. how moche be ye boude vnto
 hym that wyl consent that ye be maryed vnto hym
 so greet a pryncce & almyghty and ye a wretche his
 creature & of a poore lynage. for the comon blage
 is bynges to mary togydre. Dukes and Eyles to
~~bynges and poore prynces togydre and bynges togydre~~
 the ryche and the poore mary togydre / and yet this
 moost myghty pryncce lorde of heuen & of erthe for
 the loue he bereth vnto you to make you his queene /
 his fader of heuen to be your fader his moder to be
 yours. And so by this marriage all your kynred shal
 be of colnage by affynyte to the fad of heuen our
 lady all the angels with all the hole Genclogy of
 Crysste to whiche honour and excellence no carnall
 spowlage coude exalte you. Therefore yf ye conty-
 nue his faythfull & true spowle comyttynge your
 mynde your will & all your werkes to obserue his
 comaundementes / your reward shall be as in your
 Joynter & dowery excede all rewardes that can be
 thought & may be geuen vnto man.

Herke syster yf ye wyl be spowled to this no-
 ble pryncce & so be determyned in your mynde.
 I laye thyle wordes to you of the holy ghoost.
*Audi filia et dide i inclina aurem tuam et obliuiscere
 populum tuum et domum patris tui* That is to

saye / daughter here see and gyue humble attens
daunce / yf ye wyll be spowled to this myghty prync
ce / ye muste forgete and relynquyshe Joye and fe
lycyte of this worlde / and the houle of all your ges
neracyon / your fader and moder and all your cars
nall frendes / and ye muste folowe hym in condyc
cyons / and leue your olde name and condycyons
and to be called after his name his name is Jhes
us Nazareus. And soo ye muste be called Naza
rena. It is wryten Nazarei candidiores nunc in
terpretantur virgulti vel flondi siue custodientes
aut separati a mundo vel bñcti siue sancti aut con
secrati That is to saye. Ye muste be as a yonge
grene braunche and as a floure and as a keper of
the tresour of your husbonde and seuered from the
worlde as a noynted holy and consecrate quene /
for thyle propertees amonge other hath your spow
se. fyrste ye muste be as a yonge grene braunche /
the whiche loseth his fayre beaute whan he is se
uered from the rote. The rote of all Relyggyon is
Jhesu of Nazareth that is charyte (Quia deus ca
ritas est) And who soo euer is not in charyte he des
parteth hymselfe from almyghty god. Soo ye
muste loue your spowse Jhesu aboue all thyng / he
muste be in your mynde / in your soule in your hert
te / and in all your werkes. And of hym specially
ye muste speke / for yf ye haue any pleasure for to
speke of any other thynges of the worlde or of any

other man thence wyl he be wrothe. for as saynt
Gregory sayth (*Quidam enim ergo nobis est quia
inueni non debet quod non licet concupisci. Et iohannes*) Cryste sayth (*Qui audit eligentes facies
inspicere. ipse foinacem passionis accendit*) for
he wyl that ye kepe oonly and entyely vnto hym
your true wyttes / to haue noo pleasure for to lo-
ke vpon any man or woman / nor to here of noo worl-
dely thynges / nor speke of noo concupyscence / nor
handell noo contagious thynges / but oonly that
shall be to his pleasure and seruyce. for as saynt
Jerom sayth. There was neuer man soo Jelous
of his wyfe and taketh hede of his werkes and de-
des as our lord your spowse wyl take hede of you
for ye can thynke noo thought but he knoweth it /
nor speke noo worde but he heareth it / nor be in noo
place but he is there presente / nor noo thyng can
dysceyne hym / therefore ye muste loue hym aboue
all thyng and be in pure charyte with all your
systers and his people and seruauntes. Also Cryste
Jhesu is called (*Flor campi*) The flour of Na-
zareth / the beaute of this excedeth all other vertues
and it is so noble a fressoure that it can not be prays-
sed / and therefore virginyte is honoured in al-
myghty god. And Cryste the herde and the ledet
therof and the fyrste thyng that he dyde in erthe
whan he became man he sette vp his housholde of
virgyns and men of chastyte for to serue hym and

his churche here in erthe / as he was by virgyns the
angels serued in heuen / his moder was and is per
petuall virgyne. Iohan Euangelyste his Secre
tary a virgyne. Iohan the Baptyst a virgyne. Je
remye the prophete a virgyne / and anges in he
uen virgyns and Innumerable there syngynge and
folowynge the lombe of god the seconde persone /
and euer newe songes of Joye and glorie. The
angels of heuen honoureth virgyns as theyr bres
thern and systern And as it is wyrtyn (Apocal. xix)
The angell of god wolde not suffre saynt Iohan
Euangelyste to worlhypppe hym / for loue he was a
virgyne as he was and angell and man of the er
the. And therfore Saynt Bernarde sayth. What
is more full of beaute than is chastyte (*Quid cas
titate decorius. Que mundum de immundo con
ceptum semine de hoste domesticum de homine an
gelum facit*) The angels worlhypped saynt Ag
nes and cladde hyr in a gaiment of chastyte / crow
ned saynt Cecylie / saynt Agas shewed hyr holys
nesse / saynt Katheryne buried / and deliuered from
deth Sulanne. And as it is wyrtyn *Numeri. xxxi.*
(*Omnes feminas virgines reseruare alias omnes
iubentur interfici*) That is to saye. That where
all the people sholde be destroyed and slayne for
synne / yet god almyghty commaunded to spare
virgyns. And therfore sayth saynt Anselme (*Non
est salus nisi quem tu virgo peperisti*) Saynt Mar

garette hadde the deuyl vnder hyr feete and bound
de hym / and he cryed & sayd / leue ye ponge maye
de ye destroye me . And in lyke wyse Saynt Jus
tyn payette hym and putte hym to grete rebuke and
therefore the deuyl worshippeth virgynyte as it is
radde in Thobye the sixte chappre . for ryght as
the deuyl hath power of all vniuersall lyuers / ryght
so he honourerth virgyns and feareth theym by
cause of the angelles . And therefore Saynt Johan
Crysostomus sayth *Castitas est res angelica per
quam solum singulariter homines angelis assis
mulantur* And that angels haue in heuyn by fe
lyerte . A man or a woman beyngt there in virgyn
yte haue by grace and by grete labour . Virgyn
yte by grace hath diuerse pryuyleges . fyrste it re
plenisheth paradys (triclimasecunda questione
prima ca. Nuprie) The seconde that virgynyte is a
vertue that man only may please god with sayth
(in aut. de leuo . s. Scimus colla. in. the. in.) It is
the begynnyng of other vertues (In aut. quomodo
op. epi. s. neq; autem lactas. the. un.) That only
amonge wymmen a virgyn is to be consecrate. (rb.
di. Sicutius. the. d.) Virgyns martyrs and there
other and hath (Hircolam triclimasecunda ques
tione quinta. Si paulus) for as matrimony re
plenisheth the erthe with chyldeyn / ryght so a vir
gyn replenisheth paradys (triclimasecunda ques
tione. i. Nuprie) Moders of chyldeyn of the worlde

hath grete belynes and lordwe for to bynge forthe
 theyr children / a virgyne is in quyetnesse and byngi-
 geth forthe hyr children in grete Joye as it is wryt-
 ten (Mathei .xxij. Que parate erant intraverunt
 cum eo ad nupcias) And as it is wryten (Cantis
 cor secundo . Sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica
 mea inter filias) Virgynite is lybertyed vnto a hely
 the leys of the hely that conserued the beaute therof
 of is sobrenesse of mete and drynke / the contrarpe
 therof is shewed in Loth beynge dronken fyled his
 owne doughters (Genelis decimonono .xd.q.i.
 Inebriauerunt) Jheronimus (Virgo vinum sus-
 giat pro veneno) Els who sayth a virgyne sholde
 hate wyne as venym.

Custos.

Ve muste also be a custos / a keeper of all sus-
 he thynges as this daye shall be deliuered
 vnto you in the name of your spowle & folowe hyr
 therein . for and ye kepe not all thynges in theyr
 beynge as he hath made theym / they sholde forth
 with be destroyed / and therof Dauid sayth (Mis-
 si dominus custodierit ciuitatem etc.) So ye muste
 kepe the treclour of your spowle Cryste pertynyng
 ge to his sayth & to haue in your remembraunce &
 wyll to kepe the foure thynges that shall be deli-
 uered vnto you this daye / your deyle & your mannyll
 both beynge of blake & a ryngge w a lyght of warre
 beynge in your honde / and in bepyngge of thyle

shal be shewed as ye loue your husbonde. This deyle
le and mantyll remembred tyght well the virgyne
saint Agnes whan she sayd (*Voluit signū in fa-
ciem meā dē nullū amatoriū prēter eum admittam*)
That is to saye. she hath couerd my soule Inwar-
de and myn heede with a deyle that and yf I wyl
loue any man better than hym I shal goo to the
colour of my deyle and that is euerlastyng deeth.
In lyke wyse she shewed that hyr spowle Criste
Jhu had Indued hyr with a garment all sette with
precious stones that is to saye with charyte fayth
hope humyltye obedience abstinence & prayer &
Inbroudred all thyle saint vertues in the blake gar-
mente of hyr body and soule here knytted toggydre/
whiche may euery vertuous person dayly vye and
encrease to his rewarde by grace and free wyl that
be geuen vnto hym yf he wyl seke therfore. And
therfore the sayd saint Agnes songe & sayd to all
virgynes (*Induit me dñs ciclade auro dexta*)
(*A nulus*) Also I haue by the auctoryte geuen vnto
me by Criste Jhu to deliuer vnto you this daye
a ryng in token of maryage Indissoluble to be
made betwix you & hym. for as saint Paul sayth/
ye muste hereafter remembre no thynge but that is
godly & therfore the sayd saint Agnes cryed with
a grete voyce agaynst the deuyl & hym that tempts
ted hyr to vnciently desyre sayenge (*Discite a me
pabulum mortis, quia ab aliis amatoriū prēuentā*

sum) And shewed vnto hym and vnto all the peo-
ple with a mery voyce (*Anulo suo subornauit me
dominus noster ihesus cristus et tanq[ua]m sponsam des-
corauit me corona*) That is to saie. All the pleas-
ures and temptacions of the worlde departe from
me / for our lorde Jhesu Cryste with his ryng hath
wedde me and hath crowned me with a crowne of
euerlastyng Joye yf I kepe truly my loue & spow-
sage vnto hym.

¶ Cumen.

Also remembre the lpyght that ye bryng with
you / that sygnifyeth Cryste Jhesu that is
(*Vera lux que illuminat omnem hominem venien-
tem in hunc mundum*) Whos sayth by his churche
taught you ye muste cōtynely kepe & le your lpyght
go not out but be brennyng in your soule and in
your mynde by the blessed Incarnacōn / passyon / re-
surreccyon / and the moost blessed lyfe of our sauiour
our Cryste Jhesu / and that ye falle in none cōtrep-
synne / herelpe no: cōtours by ony mānes techyng /
no: dyspute not the rules of your relygion / but wth
all reuerence and obedyence that ye may do ye take
theym / obeie theym / and obserue theym. And what
so euer your abbess or the reuelers of your relygion
commaunde you to do / byleue it is for the helth of
your soule and accordyng to your relygion / and
honour and loue theym as your fader and moder /
ye must be pacyent amonge your systers and suffre

therin ye muste be meke ye muste ete and drynke
suche meates and drynkes as ye be comaunded and
whan ye haue not halfe slept ynough ye muste ryse
ye muste synge in your courte & ordre with your
systers and take no hede though your voyce be not
moost sweetest and cleere / soo ye haue a sweete deuoc
cion / ye muste serue your sisters and welthe theyr
feete / for Criste Ihesu to whom ye shall be spowled
unto was obedyent to his fader and suffred deeth
and welshed also be god and may the feete of his
dylapples poore sisters.

¶ Nazarena.

Also ye muste be Nazarena / that is to saye /
deliuered from the worlde / as Ihesus Naza
renus sayth hymself. Regnū meum nō est in hoc
mūdo) But though your body be here in this worl
de corporally your mynde & your soule to be with
Criste Ihesu and soo take the worlde in all thyn
ge therin and saye with saynt poull. The worlde
is to me a pame and I to the worlde / my Joye is
oonly in Criste crucified. So sister your plesure
and conuylacion muste oonly be in the crosse of
Criste that is penaunce in fastynge prayer and
mortyfycacion of your enemy the fleshe and let it
not haue his wpll kepe you within your monaster
ye and departe not therfro (.xvi. q. i. placuit. n.)
for right as a fylle depeth that is without water
right soo a man or woman of Relygion beyng

Thomas Bayly

Thomas

Without theyr cloyster is deed in theyr soules. Remember the storie of the bybell that Dena Jacobs doughter she wolde not kepe hyr within / not close as she was comaunded / but wolde go forth amonge yonge people and soo was corrupte and rauysed / and therof folowed Infemyte manslaughter and murdre. Hovles beyng in monte of Relygion he spake with god / without he spake but with man (C. lxxvi. di. c. Si) A woman of Relygion or a man beyng in theyr cloyster in prayer they speke with god / without they speke with the deuyll & therfore an holy fader sayd / ryght as an henne þ hathe egges leueth hyr egges shall of them neuer come chickens So shall none be good Relygious man or woman that leueth the place of Relygion. And as it is rad in Witis patru Ther was a monke by longe space tempted by the deuyll & he resysted hym sore / at the laste he brought the monke to the dore where he sholde departe from the place of Relygion he made there a crosse and cryed to the deuyll / thou haste pulled me hyder / pulle me now ferder & thou canst but it shall neuer lye in thy power.

¶ Cuncta.

Also remember ye be anoynted in your Baptyme & confirmacion and now to be made pertyte Nazarena Crystys wyf of Nazareth ye shall be sanctefyed & consecrate & so your name to be put in the grete kalender amonge the virgyns & spows

les of Cryste Ihu in heuen (Ihesus nazarenus was
unctus olco leticie pre oibz partibz suis) And that
geuey vnto his manhone to anoynte with vertue &
grace in this present lyf & with euerlastyng Joye
his louers & seruautes & therfore saynt John Bap
tyst sayth (Nos oēs recipim⁹ grās in plenitudine
eius) No thyng we haue suffeyent of ourself but
all cometh of his grace & therfore yf ye wyll be a
noynted with this noble oyle of mercy and grace in
this present lyf & to come to be anoynted in euerlas
tyng Joye. Ye must do that was comaunded in the
gospell by the wyle maydens þ sholde be spowled
vnto Cryste larege (Ite et emite oleū) So and
seke vnto ye may bye & haue this oyle of grace and
therfore the noble lady sayd to all hyr gentylwō
men as it is wyrtē in the boke of all longes (In
odore vnguentorū tuorū currim⁹) That is to saye
ryght as an hōlde þ hath fōūde blood or Percyng
of a beest styken & sekerh & craleth not tyll he fynde
it. So our sauour Cryste Ihesu was wounded &
lost blood & Percyrd of his blessed lyf in this worl
de to euery man to taste & folowe it tyll he fynde
hym. Ye shal not sytter nede to seke ferre tyll ye fy
de Percyrd & sauour as Dauid sayth (Sicut ceru⁹
ad fontes aquarū) Of this swete oymement of Cry
ste for he sayth by his prophete Dauid (Prope ē
dñs oibz inuocantibz eū) He is redy to euery body
whay he is called vpon. Example therof Mary

Magdalene she brought with hyr opynement of deuotion & sought hym and therefore soone she founde hym. Soo it is your dewte to seeke Crysste Ihesu to whom ye shalbe wedded nother at Nazareth Bedaleem nor Iherusalem but ye shall fynde hym here within your owne churche the same god and man Crysste Ihesu and for your very loue & contemplacyon go to an awter within your churche / or to an ymage of our lady where Gabryell saluteth hyr / Remembre the mercy & the loue of the fader of heuyn bare to all mankynde sent his angell to a yonge mayde & of hyr cleane blood of virgynite god & man was Joynded togydre. Thenne go to an other awter or place that sheweth the Natyvyte of Crysst & how that he lyeth in grete pouerte in hape & betwix two beestes & hath no comfoite but this yonge mayde his moder to be fedde of hyr breste. And so for to go to other places w^{ch} in your churche for your deuotion of remembraunce of his passyon. And specially ones / twyes / or thryes of the daye that ye seeke hym in your mynde deuoutely at the mount of Caluarie. That is that ye shall knele before the crucyfixe where his ymage is made remembryng how he god & man that neuer had offended but for he mannes nature here for the grete loue & redempcyon therof & put vnto so paynfull and shamesfull deeth in the myddes of the worlde his moder beyng present / his hondes & his fete nayled vnto the tree.

his herte stryken thorough and yet in all this payne
his charyte was so moche that he prayed vnto his
fader of heuen to forgene all them that so dyolently
& so wrongfully put hym to deth / and desyred of
his fader that all mankynde shoulde be forgene of
theyr trespasses for the offence of our fyrste formed
fader Adam & the gates of heuen to be opened to
all them that wolde beleue in hym. And in lyke wy
se to remember some deuoute place of his Relins
reccyon & blessed Ascensyon and how he shall come
to make an ende of this present worlde & deme it.
(Dei igne) And calle you & all mankynde to ac
count of theyr demeanour concernynge his fayth /
& of you how ye haue kepte your spowlage & pro
myse made vnto hym. And yf ye lyftr wel & Juste
ly & truly obserue your name that ye shall be cal
led by after your husbonde as Sazarcna that is
to saye (virgultu) fayre braunches full of fruytes of
vertue in your Relygion & floures of virgynyte &
keeper of commaundementes of your spowle / despyr
ynge pleasures & pompe of the worlde / leuynge it vnto
so þ folyshe maydens of the worlde and anoynte
your soule by holy lyuynge and so be (Sancta) as
Criste is (Sancus) & consecrate your soule to al
myghty god / sayenge vnto hy with the holy may
de & martyr saynt Agnes and saynt Ewody (Ni
hil in terris desydero preter te) I desyre nothyng
in this present lyfe but the Ihesu to be myr keeper &

defender / & to haue the pryncypally in my mynd e
& thought and than doubte ye no thyngc lyfiers /
but it shall be sayd vnto you & euerychone of you.
(*Unquentū effusū nomen tuū idco adoleſcentile
dilexerunt te nimis*) The angels of heuen beynge
thyle fayre yonge maydens & gentyl wyemen. for ye
bear the name of Nazareth that is theyr maker &
lorde wyl make Infenye myrthe & defende and ke
pe your person & not departe from till they synge
this longe moost blessed that may be sayd vnto you
(*Veni sponsa xpi accipe coronā quā tibi pparauit
in eternū*) That is to saye come mayde Nazarene
Crystis spowle to present & receyue for thy reward
de the specyall crowne of glory called (*Auriola*)
that I wyl not geue nor rewarde with but my spe
cyall louers martyrs virgyns & prechers / & that ye
may so do here h̄ ye may receyue this noble crowne
I beseeche almyghty god for his grete mercy Amen.

¶ Here endeth an exhortacyon made
to Religyous lyfiers in the tyme
of theyr consecracyon by the Reuer
rende fader in god Johan Alcock
bysshop of Ely. ¶ Enprynted at
Westmynstre by Wynken de worde



